Making Good Choices Towards a Healthy Weight

COLORADO
Department of Public Health & Environment

WIC #C17(10/2014)

If you think your child is becoming overweight, there are some things you can do. It is NOT your job to limit how much she eats at meals and snacks. Putting your child "on a diet" isn't safe either. What you *can* do is make it easy for her to eat healthy foods at regular meals and snacks and to get enough activity.

Children grow differently. An overweight child can slow down on weight gain and "grow into" their weight. It takes healthy choices, though. Here is the WHO, WHAT, WHEN and WHERE of healthy choices for a healthy weight.

WHO decides?

As the parent, *you* decide *what* food is offered, *when* your child eats and *where* they eat. Your child decides *how much* to eat and *if* he chooses to eat.

WHAT to offer?

- **Dairy:** Offer lowfat milk, cheese, and other dairy products.
- **Protein:** Offer poultry, beans, fish, and lean meats. Broil, bake, boil or steam instead of frying.
- **Grains:** Offer *whole grain* breads, cereal, pasta, and rice.
- **Fruits and Vegetables:** Offer fresh, frozen, or canned fruits and vegetables.
- **Other:** Use less butter, margarine, oil, salad dressing, and sugar. Avoid sweetened drinks. Limit juice to no more than 4 ounces a day. Only offer sweets such as candy, cakes and cookies once in awhile.

WHEN your child eats?

Have 3 meals and 2-3 snacks at regular times each day. Offer child-size servings and let her ask for seconds. Let her decide how much she wants to eat. Trust that she will stop eating when she is full.

WHERE is the best place for your child to eat?

Have your child sit at the table and eat with the family. Mealtime is a time for family sharing. Don't eat in front of the TV. This can cause children to eat more than they normally do.

Being active is fun!

Do your children play games like hopscotch, jump rope, or hide-and-seek? Do they like to ride bikes or fly kites? Encourage him to play games and be active instead of sitting in front of the TV. Whatever activity your child likes, support and encourage him to be active daily.

Be a good role model and involve yourself. It can be fun for the whole family.

Tips from other parents

Help build your child's self-esteem. Don't nag, criticize or punish your child for being overweight.

Let her help with shopping, preparing meals and setting the table. This will help her feel important and needed.

Reward your child with a smile, hug or pat on the back instead of with food.

Don't tell your child he can't eat certain foods. This will only make him want those foods more.